



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Margie A. Emmermann:**

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Thank you Arizona Cardinals!

It has been an incredible experience to watch this team beat the odds and play in Super Bowl XLIII.

Just 364 days ago, Arizona showcased Super Bowl XLII and today we celebrate our very own Arizona Cardinals who played in yesterday's Super Bowl as the 2008 NFC Champion. Arizona is proud to host many nationally renowned sporting events, such as the Super Bowl and last week's FBR Open. Additionally, we are also fortunate to have a variety of quality professional, collegiate and amateur teams and events that not only generate tourism dollars but also instill a sense of pride for Arizonans.

Arizona Cardinals...you make us proud!

Have a good week.

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### **AOT News**

#### **SAVE the DATE: 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism!**

Join more than 600 industry professionals at the premier event for our industry! The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held **July 8-10, 2009**, at The Westin Kierland Resort and Spa in Phoenix. AOT and our industry partners, the Arizona Tourism Alliance, the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association and the Arizona Restaurant Association are busy developing a new program of interactive work sessions and expert speaker presentations to provide the latest data on travel and tourism trends that can help you market your destination.

Look for registration information for the 2009 Governor's Conference on Tourism in upcoming editions of *AOT in Action*.

We look forward to seeing you there!

### **New Updates to AOT's Research Section!**

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

- [Airport Passenger Volume November 2008](#)
- [Gross Sales and Tourism Taxes October 2008](#)
- [Gross Sales and Tourism Taxes November 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance December 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance December 2008 \(By County\)](#)
- [National Park Visitation November 2008](#)
- [State Park Visitation December 2008](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at [bbillings@azot.gov](mailto:bbillings@azot.gov).

### **AOT Reevaluates FY10 TEAM Guidelines**

AOT is currently reevaluating the FY10 Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) grant guidelines. The reevaluation will include conducting focus groups with past TEAM participants to receive input from the communities. The release of the guidelines is expected to be delayed until mid to late March. The TEAM workshop dates and application deadline will shift respective to the release of the guidelines.

For more information, contact Glenn Schlottman at 602-364-3727 or via e-mail at [gschlottman@azot.gov](mailto:gschlottman@azot.gov).

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## **Cactus League Spring Training**

### ***Play Ball!***

Cactus League Spring Training has been an Arizona tradition for more than half a century. And with this year's extended spring training season, baseball enthusiasts will have even more chances to see their favorite teams train for the upcoming National Baseball League season. Spring training games begin February 25 and end April 2.

What began as a two-team league in 1947 has grown to 14 teams (15 when the Cincinnati Reds begin training in 2010) playing in nine cities throughout the state. More than a million fans visit Arizona each year to enjoy these games, which brings millions of dollars to Arizona's economy.

In 2007, The Arizona Office of Tourism, in partnership with the Cactus League Baseball Association, released the [Cactus League Attendee Tracking and Expenditure Impact Survey](#). The survey showed a significant increase in Spring Training attendance and fan expenditures for 2007, immediately revealing how Cactus League games contribute to Arizona's economy.

During the 2007 season, Spring Training fans spent a total of \$310,775,015 within the Grand Canyon State, which was a 54 percent increase from 2003 when fans spent a total of \$201,608,787. The study also revealed that 57 percent of Spring Training attendees came to Arizona from another state or country, an increase from 48 percent in 2003.

Overall, out-of-state Spring Training visitors represented 44 states – as well as the District of Columbia, Canada, Germany and Mexico. Additionally, more than 68 percent of out-of-state visitors indicated that coming to a Spring Training game was the “primary” reason for visiting Arizona.

Below is a list of all the Cactus League Spring Training teams and the stadiums in which they play.

Arizona Diamondbacks: Tucson Electric Park, Tucson  
Chicago Cubs: HoHoKam Park, Mesa  
Chicago White Sox: Camelback Ranch, Glendale  
Cleveland Indians: Goodyear Ballpark, Goodyear  
Colorado Rockies: Hi Corbett Field, Tucson  
Kansas City Royals: Surprise Stadium, Surprise  
Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim: Tempe Diablo Stadium, Tempe  
Los Angeles Dodgers: Camelback Ranch, Glendale  
Milwaukee Brewers: Maryvale Baseball Park, Phoenix  
Oakland Athletics: Phoenix Municipal Stadium, Phoenix  
San Diego Padres: Peoria Sports Complex, Peoria  
San Francisco Giants: Scottsdale Stadium, Scottsdale  
Seattle Mariners: Peoria Sports Complex, Peoria  
Texas Rangers: Surprise Stadium, Surprise  
**Starting in 2010**  
Cincinnati Reds: Goodyear Ballpark, Goodyear

For more detailed information on the Cactus League Baseball Attendee Tracking Survey, please visit [www.cactusleague.com](http://www.cactusleague.com).

For game details and ticket information, visit [www.cactusleague.com](http://www.cactusleague.com).

For history buffs, be sure to check out the Play Ball: the Cactus League Experience exhibit at the Mesa Historical Museum. Visit [www.playballexperience.com](http://www.playballexperience.com) for details.

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## **AOT Events**

### **Reach the Mexican Market at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Arizona Road Show**

The Arizona Office of Tourism will target Mexican tour operators and travel agents at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Arizona Road Show to be held in Mexico City and Guadalajara, March 23 - 27, 2009. The Road Show will highlight destination seminars for travel agents in Mexico City and Guadalajara, tour operator sales calls and dinner in Mexico City and a media breakfast in Mexico City. Registration cost is \$1,500, all other expenses are extra.

For more information please contact Loretta Belonio at [lbelonio@azot.gov](mailto:lbelonio@azot.gov) or 602-364-3725.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Event – German Media Mission**

Date – February 2-6

Location – Hamburg, Munich and Zurich

### **Event – AAA California Sales Mission**

Date – February 9-13

Location – Southern California

### **Event – Toronto Golf & Travel Show**

Date – February 27-March 1, 2009

Location – Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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## **Industry News**

### **International Visits up 7% in First 10 Months of '08**

The Department of Commerce says 43 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. during the first 10 months of 2008, an increase of 7 percent over the same period in 2007. In October 2008, total visitation was 4 million, down 2 percent compared to October 2007. International visitors spent \$120.3 billion from January through October 2008, an increase of 21 percent over the first 10 months of 2007. In October 2008, visitors spent \$11.9 billion, an increase of 7 percent over October 2007. Year-to-date 2008, Canadian visitation grew 10 percent over the same period in 2007. Arrivals from Mexico, traveling to interior U.S. points, decreased 6 percent during the first 10 months of 2008. Overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, increased 1 percent in October and 8 percent year-to-date. Visitation from overseas markets has grown for 18 consecutive months. Details at 202-482-0140. (*Special to TA*)

### **Hotel Vacancies Near 20-year High**

The downturn in the U.S. hotel industry is becoming so acute that it has thrust the sector into a crisis, leaving vacancies at a year-year high and putting many properties in danger of missing payments to lenders, says The Wall Street Journal. In the wake of cutbacks by business and leisure travelers alike, U.S. hotels this month are expected to post their 15th consecutive month of declining occupancy, longer even than their 12-month losing streak after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. That occupancy drain, coupled with declining room rates as hotels compete for customers, is expected to result in the hotel industry's steepest decline in revenue per available room since 2001, according to PKF Consulting Inc.

The report, scheduled for release today at the American Lodging Investment Summit in San Diego, says that RevPAR will fall by 9.8 percent this year. PKF expects the average occupancy among U.S. hotels to drop to 57.6 percent this year, falling by 3.2 percentage points, to its lowest level in the 20 years that Smith Travel Research has tracked the figures. The speed and depth of the industry's decline is "unprecedented" said Bjorn Hanson, a lodging and tourism professor at New York University. (*Page B1, Wall Street Journal*)

### **Business Seeks Stimulus Tax Cuts**

Business groups are ramping up lobbying efforts to expand tax credits and incentives in President Barack Obama's \$825 billion economic stimulus bill slated for key Senate action this week. The growing lobbying efforts underscore a challenge for the new president and Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill: managing the demands of lawmakers and interest groups with a stake in the outcome of the evolving economic recovery package.

The package, which Democrats hope to pass by mid-February, include both tax and spending measures aimed at creating jobs and reviving the flagging economy. Obama moved to take control of the debate over the weekend, providing the most details yet on its intended results in a four-page report and in his weekly radio-and-Internet address, and in meetings with his economic advisers. The president plans to travel to the Capitol Tuesday to meet with House Republicans, where opposition to the stimulus plan remains strong. (*Pages A3, Wall Street Journal; 5A, USA Today; A1, Washington Post, Sun.*)

The U.S. Travel Association, formerly the Travel Industry Association, announced its support for major provisions of the stimulus package, and called for two additional measures "to stimulate America's travel economy and protect 20 million U.S. jobs." U.S. Travel said it believes that welcoming more international visitors and increasing domestic travel by improving America's air travel system is fundamental to stimulating the American economy. "Travel is a key to economic recovery," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of U.S. Travel. The trade group said travel promotion would create jobs and new economic activity at no cost to the American taxpayer. U.S. Travel also endorsed several tax, transportation infrastructure, public lands infrastructure and travel facilitation improvements in the bill. (*Special to TA*)

### **Florida's Governor Vetoes Tourism Budget Cuts**

Governor Charlie Crist has vetoed a nearly 30 percent budget cut for Florida's tourism agency, allowing Visit Florida to maintain its advertising strategy through the summer, maintain visitor centers on Florida's highways and hold on to its staff. In restoring the \$9.9 million removed from Visit Florida's budget, Crist touted the agency--which gets some funding from the private sector--as an economic engine. In e-mails sent out after the veto, Visit Florida leaders warned tourism businesses to continue lobbying Crist and legislators as Tallahassee prepares to cut the upcoming year's budget by \$4 billion. ([www.MiamiHerald.com/Business](http://www.MiamiHerald.com/Business))

### **Consumer Confidence Falls in January**

Americans are in no mood to spend their way out of this recession. The conference Board said its consumer confidence index edged down to 37.7 in January from a revised 38.6 in December, lower than the reading of 39 that economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters had expected. In recent months the index has hit its lowest troughs since it began in 1967, and is hovering at less than half its level of January 2007, when it was 87.3. "It appears that consumers have begun the new year with the same degree of pessimism that they exhibited in the final months of 2008," said Lynn Franco, director of the Conference Board Consumer Research Center. "Looking ahead, consumers remain quite pessimistic about the state of the economy and about their earnings." (*AP; [www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business](http://www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business); Pages 1B, USA Today; B4, New York Times*)

### **Survey Finds Affluent Market Still Strong**

The Ypartnership Portrait of Affluent Travelers, a national survey of 800 U.S. adults conducted last August, found that, despite the weakening economy, one in four affluent leisure travelers

plans to take more trips during the next 12 months than they took during the previous 12 months. Nearly three out of five, or 58 percent, are likely to take the same number of trips, and one in three (35 percent) expects to spend more on leisure travel. "This highly desirable demographic group differs markedly from the general population of travelers and the implications for both marketing and advertising strategy are profound," said Peter Yesawich, chairman and CEO of Ypartnership, the Orlando-based marketing agency. Details at [www.ypartnership.com](http://www.ypartnership.com). ([www.TravelPulse.com](http://www.TravelPulse.com), 1/27; *Special to TA*)

### **Starwood Hotels & Resorts Posted a 46% Drop in 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide posted a 46 percent drop in fourth-quarter net income amid anemic consumer demand, offering the first detailed look at the dimming prospects for the global hotel industry. Starwood, which operates more than 900 properties in 100 countries under brand names including Westin, Sheraton and St. Regis, said net income declined to \$79 million from \$146 million in the year-earlier quarter. Revenue dropped 17 percent to \$1.33 billion as demand weakened beyond expectations in key regions such as Latin America and the Middle East, which had previously been bright spots in an otherwise bleak landscape. Revenue per available room dropped 20 percent in the fourth quarter at hotels open at least a year. (*Page B7, Wall Street Journal*)

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### **[Calendar of Events](#)**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!